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Durham Appearance Commission

ANNUAL REPORT

Date: **April 16, 2012**

To: **Members of the Durham City Council**

From: **Todd Parrott, Chair, Durham City County Appearance Commission**

Subject: **2011 Durham City County Appearance Commission Annual Report**

Introduction. The Durham City-County Appearance Commission is a 15-member advisory board whose mission is to enhance and improve the visual quality and aesthetic character of Durham City and County. The Commission consists of seven members appointed by the City Council and eight members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. Commission members vary in their background from Architects and Landscape Architects to other design professionals, developers, and citizens interested in design and appearance issues in general. The Commission meets the third Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. in Conference Room GA on the ground floor of City Hall.

The Commission has absorbed the responsibilities of its former sub-committees. Reviews of major public projects, previous delegated to the Project Review Committee, are completed by the full commission who provide on a variety of projects, both short term and on-going. This report details the activities of each working committee and also provides a summary of other Commission work.

General Commission Accomplishments for 2011. One of the Appearance Commission's roles is to provide feedback on the design of major public projects, and private projects as requested by elected officials. Due to the limited number of reviews this year, the full Commission has absorbed this task.

In 2011 the Commission reviewed the designs for four projects including Fire Station #9, South Durham Reclamation Facility, Brown Water Treatment Plant, and the Parks and Recreation Operations Facility.

Golden Leaf Awards. The volume of nominations and the fiscal sponsorship for the Golden Leaf Awards was lower than in the previous years. As a result, Commission, in conjunction with Keep Durham Beautiful, decided to forgo the Awards for this year.

Overall Commission Goals for 2011. The Commission aspires to continue to provide urban design suggestions and general appearance advice on a variety of projects. We seek to advocate good design, in both the private and public sectors, and encourage all projects to consider high quality, innovative design to be an important element in the success of any project.

One of the challenges facing the Commission had been to maintain the membership and to fill the seats designated for design professionals. The Commission recognizes the necessary role of architects,

landscape architects and other design and development professionals in providing quality comments on public projects. At the suggestion of the Joint City-County Planning Committee (JCCPC), the Interlocal Agreement was revised In 2008 to assign seats to the professions listed above to ensure a strong and broad base of expertise on the Commission to aid in the successful completion of these reviews. While preference toward these professionals is given, the applicants for open seats do not always possess these qualifications.

The Commission has decided to focus on advocating for the Central Durham Gateway Plan and to coordinate with the Durham Appearance Advocacy Group (DAAG) and the Durham Convention and Visitor's Bureau (DCVB) to develop a series of appearance related presentations.

In the coming year the Commission will strive to:

- Provide timely, helpful, and creative feedback for projects submitted for review;
- Campaign for the Durham Appearance Advocacy Group (DAAG) to develop funding opportunities for the Central Durham Gateway Plan;
- Develop and deliver the first of a series of appearance related presentations that, with the Durham Appearance Advocacy Group (DAAG), will be presented to various local groups and business leaders;
- Cultivate the Golden Leaf Awards program in collaboration with Keep Durham Beautiful (KDB) and the Environmental Affairs Board (EAB);
- Assist the Durham Convention and Visitor's Bureau (DCVB) to develop a comprehensive way-finding strategy; and
- Continue to meet with representatives of City and County departments in an effort to understand the processes that affect public projects and the visual environment.

The Appearance Commission is looking forward to another productive and fulfilling year serving Durham. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve and better our community.

2011 Durham City County Appearance Commission Members. Olumayowa Alabi, Tonya Battle, Jacqueline Blue, Christina Conitzer, Howard Holcomb (Vice Chair), Mark Hough, Derek Jones, Katherine Jordan (Secretary), Brian Marks, Malissa McLeod, Todd Parrott (Chair), Jonathan Parsons, Stacey Poston, Wanona Satcher, Lesley Stobert, Susan Straw, Kevin Turner, and Rebecca Welborn.

Recommendation. To receive the Annual Report.

Staff Contact. Anne Kramer, Planning Department

Attachments.

Attachment A: Appointee Attendance 2011

Attachment B: Budget Request Letter